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# Mexico's out to twist Washington's tail

A MAJOR rift is developing between the U.S. and Mexico over that country's decision to invite a Soviet naval task force — carrying nuclear weapons — to pay a port call next month.

The task force is believed to include a Kirov class cruiser which, according to U.S. intelligence, is the Soviets' most modern battle cruiser and is armed with SSN-21 nuclear missiles.

Sources say the warships will be headed toward Veracruz, in the Gulf of Mexico, and also have been invited to stop over in Tampico — 500 miles from Brownsville, Texas.

It's the first time the Soviet navy has been invited to visit Mexico and it represents a new phase in the cat-and-mouse games waged by the Kremlin to test U.S. resolve.

White House and Pentagon officials are outraged at the Mexican government — especially after learning that the visit was engineered by the Sandinist government of Nicaragua.

Mexico has bitterly opposed U.S. policy in Nicaragua and recently moved to



improve diplomatic ties with the Sandinistas.

The decision to invite the Soviets is seen in Washington as an attempt by the Mexican government to "thumb their noses" at the U.S.

Insiders view the Kremlin's acceptance as part of its strategy to embarrass President Reagan and gain leverage at the November summit in Geneva.

It remains unclear how the White House will respond.

U.S. officials say the decision violates the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed by 14 Latin American nations, which bars "any form of possession of any nuclear weapons" in Central America.

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